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ABSTRACT

As a result of intensive advocacy, girls' and women's education is a developmental priority in India. Availability of international development assistance for basic education and women's education has gone up significantly. Government and donor perceptions of gender issues in education and the importance of reaching out to girls to achieve the goal of universal elementary education have noticeably changed. Despite progress, almost 50 percent of girls and women in India do not have access to education. Almost every conceivable strategy and approach has been covered in government policy documents that recognize these two stumbling blocks: poverty and social status. The government has a well established system for monitoring programs and submitting regular reports to State Assemblies and the Parliament. Program focus on gender equity is often lost during implementation; lack of gender sensitivity among administrators and technical people is a stumbling block. Political will, administrative commitment, and leadership are key in the march to gender equity in educational access in different parts of India. Recommended strategies to reform the system are to make school accessible to every child and to retain every child in school; design and implementation of special programs for deprived girls and out-of-school adolescents; to replicate innovations; and to sensitize educators to gender dimensions of educational access. (Contains 17 references.) (YLB)

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GIRLS' AND WOMEN'S EDUCATION in India

ED 469 235

This paper:

This paper is an effort to capture the emerging picture with respect to girls' and women's education in India. While the general narrative has a national focus, concrete examples, experiences, case studies and voices from the field have been drawn from Rajasthan. Given the size of India and the enormity of the problem, it is not possible to do justice to a wide range of issues impacting on girls and women's education. A study was commissioned by UNESCO-PROAP in 1996-97 and this resulted in the book titled *Bridging The Gap Between Intention And Action – Girls' And Women's Education In South Asia*. Many of the issues discussed in that book have not been repeated, and where absolutely essential, specific items have been quoted. In this paper the author has drawn upon recent survey data on education and development, latest progress reports of special programmes and schemes of Government of India and Government of Rajasthan. This paper focuses attention on policy makers and argues for greater commitment and effective leadership to ensure sincere implementation of government's own policies and programmes.

The context:

The ***World Declaration on Education For All***, Jomtien 1990 was an important milestone in the march towards universal elementary education and girls' and women's access to basic education. Forty years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this conference tugged our conscience by reminding the world that everyone has a right to education – ***Basic education is more than an end in itself, it is the foundation for lifelong learning and human development***. This *rights* perspective on educational access and equality got a tremendous boost during the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo 1994. ***Everyone has a right to education, which shall be directed to the full development of human resources, and human dignity and potential, with particular attention to women and the girl child. Education should be designed to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those related to population and development*** (Page 10, Agenda for Action, ICPD, 1994). The very fact that a population conference forced the international community to look into the inter-linkages between population, poverty, gender inequality and development, was a major departure from the past. Women's and girls' education was placed centre stage in the struggle for human development and social justice in the Copenhagen declaration on social development in 1995. ***We affirm that, in both economic and social terms, the most productive policies and investments are those that empower people to maximise their capacities, resources and opportunities***. (Paragraph 7 of the Copenhagen declaration, 1995). The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995, reaffirmed the commitments made by governments and called upon the international community to intensify efforts. Four important world conferences, one after another, bombarded our world with messages of equality, empowerment, human rights and universal access to the tools of knowledge – i.e. education.

While cynics in all societies may brush aside the impact of such international agreements, it is widely acknowledged that, as a result of intensive advocacy, girls' and women's education has been accepted as a developmental priority. Availability of international development assistance for basic education and women's education (especially in India) has gone up significantly. More importantly, there has been a noticeable change in Government and donor perceptions of gender issues in education and the importance of reaching out to girls in order to achieve the goal of universal elementary education. Successive Human Development Reports brought out by the United Nations forced political leaders and administrators to acknowledge the inherent value of education in building capabilities of people to survive with dignity. Donors supporting education programmes in the developing world flagged the gender agenda. This environment coupled with the realisation of the importance of sustained advocacy resulted in a virtual explosion of data, case studies,

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reports and conferences on girls' and women's education. The popular media has also started paying some attention to glaring gender disparities in educational access and achievement. All these contributed in no small measure to creating an environment for introspection and change. The climate is right to pool all our energies and push hard to ensure that policy level commitment of the Government is translated into action – i.e. bridging the gap between intention and action.

We are at a very critical juncture in India. We are at a point when sustained pressure to ensure universal access to and retention in schools and enhancing the quality and content of education at all levels may actually bear fruit. A well known educationist commented that even in a very gender iniquitous society like Rajasthan families no longer need to be convinced of the importance of sending their girls to school. Wherever accessible and good quality educational facilities are provided, girls come in large numbers. Most recently, workers in Lok Jumbish Rajasthan were pleasantly surprised when young adolescent girls came forward on their own to ask for education, albeit through a condensed programme in a residential camp. Despite the recent fund flow problems[1] the community has come forward to continue village based educational activities. The tragedy, she said, is not that people are not convinced about the importance of education for their daughters; the tragedy is that they want to send their daughters to school, but cannot do so because problems of access, quality and content remain unresolved[2]. In the early 1990s the then Director in-charge of women and child development in Rajasthan lamented over the inability of the system to absorb girls. After an intensive girls enrolment campaign, workers in the Women's Development Programme were astounded when teachers discouraged girls, especially from backward/poor communities from coming to school. The single teacher schools were only able to cope with about 30-40 children. The sad truth is that if all children, boys and girls, were to start attending school one fine morning, the existing system would not be able to cope with it. The Joint UN System programme for community based education has estimated a shortfall of 1.50 million teachers if every child were to attend school, at a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:40. Government of India estimates a shortfall of 925,000 teachers[3].

What does data say?

It is quite well known that India has made progress in education, but not enough and definitely not at a pace we would have like to see. Even after half a century after India attained independence, almost sixty percent of girls/women are not literate. Most of them have never been to school or any other education programme. Recent surveys (even those done after the launching of Total Literacy Campaigns) do not reveal any dramatic change. Census of India was collected in 1990-91, the Human Development Survey was done in 1993-94, and the National Sample Survey was also done in 1993-94. Small surveys and studies done in some pockets across the country do not show any radical difference. For example intensive school mapping done under the Lok Jumbish Project in Rajasthan reveal that *real enrolment in Class I is likely to be 70 to 75 per cent of what is reported (in official data)*. People working with adult women report that if a person says he or she can sign his/her name; they are recorded as *literate*. Therefore, at least 10 to 15 per cent of *literate* people may actually be functionally illiterate.

How many children in the 6-14 age group are really not in school? Estimates vary from 60 million (GOI/NCERT 1995), 61 million (NFHS, 1993-94) to 77 million (NSS, 1993-94). It can be reasonably assumed that 70 per cent of our-of-school children are girls. Census data on age specific attendance (Table II and III on the following page) in education programmes captures a disturbing picture. It is quite evident from the table that there are significant rural-urban differences. Age is another significant factor. Combination of the two is quite disastrous. Only 30.2 per cent of girls (5-9 age group) and 44.6 per cent of girls (10-14 age group) are attending any education programme in rural India. As we move up the age ladder, it is quite alarming to note that only 18.0 and 3.0 per cent of adolescent girls and

1 Lok Jumbish was in the verge of signing the Phase III agreement with Sida in May-June 1998. The Swedish Government decided to suspend bilateral aid to India in the wake of the nuclear tests. As a result, the programme is currently facing severe fund flow problem.

2 Personal conversation with Dr. Sharada Jain of Sandhan, Jaipur when she narrated Ms. Lakshmi Krishnamurty reactions to a field visit to girls education camp in Lok Jumbish.

3 Source: Joint UN System Support for Community Based Primary Education, Project Document, 1997.

Table I: **Literacy rates in select states, 1991 and 1994**

	% Literate – (Age 7+) Rural and Urban 1991 Census		% Literate – 1994 (Age &+) Rural Only HDI / NCAER	
State	Male	Female	Male	Female
Haryana	67.85	40.94	69.4	38.1
Himachal Pradesh	74.57	52.46	79.4	57.0
Punjab	63.68	49.72	68.2	51.2
Bihar	52.63	23.10	56.6	28.8
Uttar Pradesh	55.35	26.02	62.0	28.3
Madhya Pradesh	57.43	28.39	58.9	27.1
Orissa	62.37	34.40	67.8	40.7
Rajasthan	55.07	20.84	60.4	19.0
West Bengal	67.24	47.15	66.3	49.9
Gujarat	72.54	48.50	71.3	46.7
Maharashtra	74.84	50.51	70.9	45.1
Andhra Pradesh	56.24	33.71	60.6	39.1
Karnataka	67.25	44.34	65.1	43.9
Kerala	94.45	86.93	93.0	86.5
Tamil Nadu	74.88	52.29	74.6	53.2
India	63.86	39.42	65.6	40.1

Table II: **Attending any education programme by completed level of education, India, Compiled from Census, GOI 1991**[4] (stated in percentage)

	Total		Boys		Girls	
Age	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
0-4	0.4	1.8	0.4	1.9	0.4	1.7
5-9	34.4	54.5	38.4	56.0	30.2	52.9
10-14	56.2	77.6	66.6	81.1	44.6	73.8
15-19	30.2	51.8	40.8	56.8	18.0	46.1
20-24	7.7	17.2	12.5	22.3	3.0	11.6

Table III: **Attending any education programme by completed level of education, Rajasthan Compiled from Census, GOI 1991** (stated in percentage)

	Total		Boys		Girls	
Age	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
0-4	0.4	2.4	0.5	2.4	0.3	2.1
5-9	24.3	52.9	32.7	52.9	14.9	44.8
10-14	45.0	81.1	66.0	81.8	20.9	62.5
15-19	26.2	59.7	42.7	59.7	6.3	38.1
20-24	6.2	22.7	11.1	2.7	1.4	8.7

4 This data has been compiled by Charu Gupta and Dr. Leela Visaria from Census of India, 1991

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Table IV: **Gross enrolment ratios in Class I-V and VI-VIII, years 1991-92 and 1992-93:**

	Class I-V			Class VI-VIII		
India / State	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
All India – 1991-92	95.90	106.20	85.02	59.07	69.62	47.91
All India – 1992-93	102.74	116.61	88.09	61.15	74.19	47.40
All India – 1995-96	104.30	114.50	93.30	67.60	79.50	54.90
Rajasthan – 1991-92	85.10	110.37	58.46	46.24	67.82	23.40
Rajasthan – 1992-93	79.06	106.67	50.05	44.93	65.93	22.61
Rajasthan – 1995-96	103.40	129.30	75.30	56.90	79.90	32.00

Source: Select Education Statistics of MHRD, GOI 1991-92 and Sixth All India Educational Survey, NCERT, GOI, 1992-93, Annual Report of GOI 1996-97

women in the age group 15-19 and 20-24 respectively are attending any educational programme in rural India. The urban scenario is slightly better with 46.1 and 11.6 per cent of girls in the age groups of 15-19 and 20-24 attending any educational programme.

The ever enrolment ratio for rural girls in the 6-14 age group is only 64.8 per cent (HDI Survey, 1994). The Human Development Survey conducted by National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in 1993-94 brought out the sharp disparities across social and economic groups, with girls' enrolment and retention in schools decreasing as household income and social status decreased. (See Annex I for table on ever enrolment, discontinuation and non-attendance rate for children in the 6-14 age group). This picture is reinforced by the National Sample Survey conducted in July 1993-94 by the Department of Statistics, GOI. Gender disparities are evident in all age groups and are really marked in some regions of the country like Rajasthan. It is indeed alarming to note that 49.8 per cent of girls in the 5-9 age group and 35.5 per cent of girls in the 10-14 age group are not literate, and unfortunately, may not be attending any education programmes (even if they are enrolled) – formal or non-formal. The situation is indeed worrisome. Therefore, given the wealth of data generated by three recent national surveys it is quite apparent that enrolment rates coupled with school attendance rates give a very clear picture of the situation. The conventional enrolment (given in Table III on page 3) and dropout rates distort the picture. It is now widely accepted that enrolment data is not very reliable and that the information on children dropping out is captured only at the terminal stage – i.e. Class V and Class VIII.

Eventhough the enrolment ratios are not very reliable, it is obvious that when coupled with official dropout rates, the picture is as gloomy as school attendance rates discussed above. The dropout rate in classes I to V is 46.74% for boys, 49.69% for girls in 1992-93 (GOI, MHRD, 1993). There has not been a significant change in dropout rates in 1995-96. It was 37.92% for boys, 41.31% for girls for Class I-V and 54.99% for boys and 61.70% for girls for Class I-VIII respectively. (Annual Report of MHRD, GOI 1996-97).

Let us look at age specific literacy rates. It is alarming to note that 35.5 per cent of girls in the 10-14 age group and 45.6 in the 15-19 age group are not literate in rural India. The urban picture is better, 26.0 per cent of girls in the 10-14 age group and 15.9 per cent of girls in the age group15-19 are not literate. (See Annex II for table on Percentage distribution of persons of different age groups by general education levels in rural and urban India. NSS Fifth Round, GOI, 1993-94). A very small proportion of girls (and boys) became literate through Non-formal education and/or adult education programmes. Given that this data was collected after July 1993, when the TLC mission was in full swing, this revelation is indeed disturbing. *Less that 0.5 per cent of young people in the 10-14 and 15-19 age groups reported going to NFE or AE centres*. The proportion for higher age groups, i.e. 20 to 45 years having benefited from TLC in rural areas is 2 to 3 per thousand for men and 1 to 2 per thousand for women. The corresponding figures for Non-formal and adult education in rural areas are 3 to 4 per thousand for men and 2 to 4 per thousand for women. (Source: NSS, Fiftieth Round, GOI 1993-94 Table 19). The urban scenario is not significantly different. One possible explanation could be that sample surveys, however representative

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they may be of general population, do not capture pockets of success. **Notwithstanding the inherent limitation of sample surveys, there is substantial evidence to show that non-formal and adult education programmes cannot turn the tide. Unless every single child has the opportunity to go to school, and unless the government can ensure universal elementary education – there can be no significant improvement in the literacy and education scenario of India.** If and when this becomes a reality, then non-formal and adult education, especially for adolescents and young adults, can make a qualitative difference.

Income and community specific data collected in the NSS survey and the HDI survey reveal sharp disparities. Poor rural girls and women from low-income groups and from disadvantaged communities (Scheduled Class, Scheduled Tribe and some minority communities) constitute the bulk of the illiterate population. Current school attendance rates reveal that this situation is not likely to improve in the near future. (See Annex III for table on school attendance rates (percent) by age group and household monthly per capita expenditure class in Rural and Urban India, compiled from the Fiftieth round of NSS data of GOI, 1993-94).

So where do we stand? Half a century after Independence we are nowhere near achieving universal elementary education. Almost fifty percent of the girls and women of India do not have the opportunity to acquire education, and even if they do enrol, chances are that the poorest and the most disadvantaged among them will drop out. This reinforces the popular myth that education plays a very marginal role in the battle for survival. It has been amply demonstrated that education can indeed become a powerful tool in women's struggle for equality and empowerment. The economic and social benefits of women's education are well known and need not be repeated. The question is how can the development community mount pressure on the Government and organisations in civil society to put resources (financial and human) to realise the goal of universal educational access for girls and women.

Policies and implementation strategies:

Almost every conceivable strategy and approach has been covered in policy documents of the Government of India. All policy documents recognise that the first stumbling block is poverty, and that women from poor communities, especially in rural areas need special attention. The second stumbling block is social status, especially when considering children from disadvantaged communities (Scheduled Castes. Scheduled Tribes, some minority groups, nomadic tribe). While affirmative action in the form of reservation of jobs and places in institutions of higher learning have been provided, there is irrefutable evidence to show that the stumbling block is at the elementary level. Children do not have access to good quality schools that can enable them to break out of existing stereotypes. Therefore, despite well-intentioned policies, children from disadvantaged groups and communities are not able to access good quality education at the primary level.

5 Source: Vimala Ramachandran: The Indian Experience, in Bridging the gap between intention and action – girls and women's education in South Asia; UNESCO-PROAP and ASPBAE, Bangkok and New Delhi, 1998

Girls Education – overview of issues[5]

Systemic issues	*Content and process of education*	*Economy, society and culture*
Problem of Access	Gender stereotyping	Poverty / powerlessness
Dysfunctional schools	Perpetuation of gender-bias	Status of women
Quality of schools	Relevance of curriculum	Cost to family
Motivation of teachers	Language	Child labour / domestic chores
Existence of multiple delivery systems – formal, non-formal, condensed, satellite and residential.	Joyful learning	Farm / non-farm work
	Ready access to books, magazines, papers and so on	Caught up in survival battles
	Appropriate reading material for the newly literate	Perception of herself
Calendar and timings		Post puberty practices
		Child marriage
Recognition that above are not gender-neutral and that they affect girls in a special way		

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The Seventh and Eighth Five Year Plan documents recognise that national developmental and demographic goals cannot be achieved unless women's education is taken up on a priority basis. All possible strategies, starting from flexible school timings to decentralised planning and administration have been recommended over and over again. One of the arguments put forth by educational administrators is that serious efforts were really never made to implement some key recommendations like flexible school timings and appointing local people as teachers in primary schools. Some of these ideas have been tried out in pockets, especially in Rajasthan through Shiksha Karmi Project and Lok Jumbish. Flexible timings were also experimented in Madhya Pradesh. But, unfortunately they have remained essentially micro-level initiatives and have not been integrated into the mainstream.

This phenomenon has compelled some commentators to ask if non-implementation of Governments own policy is because of lack of political will or because certain powerful vested interests are determined to ensure a significant section of our society remains illiterate and disempowered. Therefore, many enlightened leaders are demanding the law of the land be enforced and that elementary education be made a fundamental and inalienable right. Making children's rights to primary education justiceable and enforceable in court of law could push basic education on the national agenda as never before. Simultaneously, making administrators accountable for implementation of Government's policies could, again, create a favourable condition. For example, District Collectors (Chief Executive Functionary of the Government in the District) should be made accountable. They should be made accountable for ensuring textbooks reach every primary school by the first working day of a new academic session, for review of presence of schools teachers (ensure no posts are vacant and leave vacancies reported), and for ensuring government incentives are distributed on schedule.

What are these policies? Scanning though documents of the Government from 1854 to the present, it is quite apparent that there is no dearth of policy recommendations.[6] They are:

- Provide schools within walking distance, closer to the place of dwelling, if necessary satellite schools for remote hamlets,
- Provide child care facilities/crâche within school premises,
- Provide escort for girls, if school is away from the village or hamlet,
- Introduce flexible school timings and region specific school calendar,
- Provide alternative modes / forms of schooling, combine formal with non-formal, condensed courses for drop-outs, residential schools (Ashram Shalas) for special focus groups like nomadic tribes etc.,
- Appoint more women teachers in rural areas and provide them with secure residential accommodation.
- Expand pool of women teachers by lowering qualifications, providing intensive training (near the place of dwelling), providing regular educational support, organizing special condensed coursed for drop-outs who can be trained to work as teachers, providing secure accommodation for out-station teachers, etc.
- Make curriculum relevant to the lives of poor women who are engaged in battle for survival,
- Recognise the problem of working children, provide special facilities with flexible calendar and timings,
- Introduce facilities for "bridge programmes" to enable dropouts to re-enter the school system.
- Provide incentives like uniforms, textbooks, exercise books, attendance scholarship, free bus passes etc.
- Involve the community in managing the school through advocacy, mobilisation and formation of village education committees with at least 50% women members,
- Improve quality of education, motivate teachers to make learning a joyful exercise,
- Decentralise educational planning and administration, bring it closer to people so that it reflects the special needs and aspirations of the community,
- Create village level education committees to plan, support, encourage and monitor basic education;

6 This has been excerpted from a UNESCO-PROAP and ASPBAE publication edited by Vimala Ramachandran titled *Bridging the gap between intention and action – Girls' and Women's Education in South Asia*; Bangkok and New Delhi 1998

- Address management issues that inhibit the implementation of government policy, like grievance redressal, administrators and teachers union's resistance to flexible timings, school calendar, recruitment of women with lesser qualifications from rural areas, recruitment of local youth in remote areas where teacher absenteeism is rampant, appointment of teachers to a specific school and so on, and
- Mobilise public opinion for primary education and universal literacy in general and women's education in particular. Advocate for greater political will and administrative commitment.
- Make it a national mission with time-bound goals and targets through National Literacy Mission (NLM), District Primary Education Projects (DPEP) and National Elementary Education Mission (NEEM).

The National Policy on Education (1986, revised in 1992) is perhaps the most lucid document on women's education. It was hailed as a major breakthrough in addressing gender issues in government policy. The chapter titled "Education for Women's Equality" states: "Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralise the accumulated distortions of the past; there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women. The National Education System will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators, and the active involvement of educational institutions. This will be an act of faith and social engineering...The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in, elementary education will receive overriding priority, through provision of special support services, setting of time targets, and effective monitoring...."

This document was developed after nation-wide debate through a Government document titled – *Challenge of Education*. University teachers and students, school teachers, training institutions, NGOs, newspapers and a wide range of formal and informal groups/organisations were invited to comment on and debate India's new policy. This process was initiated in 1985 and continued for a year. The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) sifted through, compiled and edited the recommendations made by a wide range of people across the country. This process was unprecedented in India and generated a great deal of enthusiasm for education in general. The National Policy on Education was accepted by the Parliament in 1986. Due to political compulsions arising out of change of governments, this policy was debated again in 1992 and accepted with minor modifications. The section on Education for Women's Equality was brought forward from being Chapter IV of the 1986 Programme of Action to Chapter I in the 1992 version. The following rider was inserted: "Education for Women's Equality is too important to be left to the individual proclivities of persons in charge of implementation. It should be incumbent on all actors, agencies, and institutions in the field of education at all levels to be gender sensitive and ensure that women have their rightful share in all educational programmes and activities..." (Programme of Action, National Policy on Education, GOI, 1992)

The period from 1986 to 1991 was, perhaps, a very creative period in the history of basic education and women's education in India. Six new initiatives were launched by the government, namely: British ODA supported the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project and the Swedish aided the Rajasthan Shiksha Karmi project in 1987; Netherlands supported Mahila Samakhya – Education for Women's Equality in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat in 1988; UNICEF funded the Bihar Education Project and World Bank supported the Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project in 1990; and Swedish aided Rajasthan Lok Jumbish in 1992. All these externally aided education projects explored alternative administrative mechanisms for flow of funds and administration. The Shiksha Karmi programme was the first to be administered through an autonomous body, the Shiksha Karmi Board. This, it was argued, provided the project the necessary flexibility to run a community based education programme while retaining the legitimacy and authority of a government department. Similar implementation mechanisms were adopted in all subsequent externally aided programmes.

While basic education was opened up to external assistance, adult literacy remained a national commitment. In 1988-89 the Government of India launched the National Literacy Mission. As two of the motivation forces behind the programme Mr. Anil Bordia and former Director of the National

Reaching the unreached girls and women.

Are autonomous societies the answer to administrative bottleneck?

One of the unresolved issues in educational administration is the appropriateness of autonomous institutions (called societies in India) to implement special programmes and projects. While, the idea of establishing statutory institutions like University Grants Commission, Board of Secondary Education, Universities has been accepted across the world, creating parallel structures to implement projects and programmes has been contentious. In 1986-87 Government of India and the Government of Rajasthan agreed to set up a Society called Shiksha Karmi Board to implement the Swedish assisted innovative education programme. This government sponsored NGO (popularly known as GONGO) was registered under the Societies Registration Act, almost like any other NGO in India. There was, however, one significant difference, the formal head of the society was an ex-officio position with the Education Secretary of the state as the head. This structure, it was hoped, would provide the flexibility and openness of a NGO alongside outreach, legitimacy and authority of the Government. This was seen as a necessary mechanism to reach out to children in remote areas through paraprofessional teachers and to mobilise girls. It was also argued that relaxing rules for recruitment and organising intensive ongoing support and training would not be possible within the rigid formal school system.

Shiksha Karmi Board set a new precedent. Subsequently almost all special projects, including District level implementation mechanisms under the Total Literacy Campaign, adopted this structure. The Government registered these societies under the formal leadership and control of the civil service. Lok Jumbish of Rajasthan is an exception where the Chairman is a retired civil servant. For all practical purposes these societies are controlled by the formal administrative system. The systems adopted for flow of funds and recruitment policies are, no doubt, different.

How does this structure interact with the mainstream? Experience of ten state level structures reveals a disturbing picture. While innovation, flexibility and responsiveness are hailed as the hallmark of these structures, they essentially remain outside the mainstream. For example Mahila Samakhya Societies in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh have been able to reach out to poor rural women and involve them empowering educational processes. The interaction of these structures with the mainline education department is minimal, even though the Education Secretary of the State is the Chairman of the Society. Flexible rules and more liberal systems for travel and other allowances create imbalances – leading to jealousies. There have been instances when main line administrators have consciously created financial bottlenecks. The experience of such programmes has not been integrated into mainstream educational administration, and remains a parallel structure. Workers of Shiksha Karmi Project and Lok Jumbish in Rajasthan narrate similar experiences. Sometimes the relationship becomes adversarial. Sometimes they are ghettoised.

The moot point is whether the valuable experience of these special projects administered by autonomous societies will be adapted by mainstream structures. Existing evidence is not very encouraging, especially for girls and women's education. It is argued that cumbersome process oriented implementation, monitoring and accountability system, that are essential for women's mobilisation, cannot be replicated in mainstream structures. Others argue that the unit cost of special projects with special structures is not replicable.

Notwithstanding above criticism, it is quite evident that smooth flow of funds, greater flexibility, genuine decentralisation and appointment of committed people (not just experienced people) makes a difference. As long as mainstream systems remain rigid, the Government, donor agencies and leaders with a vision cannot but create autonomous structures. Bypassing the main artery becomes a necessity when it is clogged, atrophied or fossilised.

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Literacy Mission, Ms Anita Kaul, put it *it was a multipronged programme aimed at the acquisition of literacy skills, social awareness, and functional development by the participants. As it consciously tried to move away from being identified with the government programme, it provided for greater participation of voluntary agencies.... Inherent structural deficiencies, coupled with inflexibility's of all kinds and at all levels – in the timing of the centres, in numbers enrolled, in the provision of funds, and in the bureaucratised, hierarchical attitudes – led to a situation where the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP), which had had a promising start, became another ineffective government programme.* (Bordia and Kaul, 1992).

That was not all, this period, i.e. 1986-1991 witnessed three other national initiatives to promote basic education, with a focus on greater participation of girls and women. Operation Blackboard was launched in 1987 with national resources. This programme focused on construction of school buildings and appointment of a second teacher in single teacher schools. The Non-Formal Education (NFE) initiative was also launched with government's own resources. Taking cue from the erstwhile NAEP, this scheme provided grant-in-aid to state governments and NGOs to start NFE centres for out-of-school children. One hundred per cent central funds were promised for NFE centres for girls[7]. A similar scheme was also launched for innovations in elementary education. These two NGOs oriented schemes created space for innovation and experimentation.

In 1991-92 there was intense speculation over the impact of Structural Adjustment loan on the social sectors. In particular, there was some apprehension about decreased government spending on elementary education. As a result of global advocacy on the harmful consequences of Structural Adjustment Policies, the World Bank and Government of India agreed on a Social Safety Net programme. It was agreed that a certain proportion of the loan will be spent on the social sectors, namely basic education, primary health, public distribution of subsidised food grains and a national renewal fund for re-training of labour forced into unemployment. As a result of this agreement, the Government of India proposed the District Primary Education Project (DPEP) in 1992. This was envisaged as an intensive area specific and *decentralised* effort to revitalise the primary education system. This strategy was seen as an answer to criticism of a fragmented approach to basic education. DPEP, it was hoped, would provide multidimensional inputs in the same geographic area, thereby giving basic education a big push. DPEP was formally launched in 1994 with the three corner stones of the programme being sustainability, equity and local ownership. Bridging the gender gap is subsumed in the equity agenda, alongside social and economic backwardness.

Scanning though the documents produced by the DPEP bureau it is evident that one of the main thrusts of the programme is to simultaneously fix demand side and supply side issues. A recent document titled *Three years of DPEP – assessment and challenges* brought out in 1998 notes that *successful community awareness and mobilisation campaigns under DPEP have contributed to significant accelerated increase in enrolment, especially of girls. Enrolment of girls has been higher in DPEP districts as compared to non-DPEP district. Gender and social inequities have reduced to a substantial level.* (Page 6, GOI, 1998) The programme is still young and it remains to be seen whether the momentum reported in some pockets can be sustained. Sharp regional differences are also reported, with the relatively progressive states (with respect to women's education) doing much better that the gender iniquitous states.

With the exception of DPEP and the UP Basic Education Programme (now subsumed in DPEP), all the other externally assisted projects are run with the help of bilateral aid and in the case of the Joint UN System project which is funded by the UN System. The Government, through its own

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7 When the idea of providing different forms of schools in rural areas was mooted in the 1966 Education Commission report, a significant number of administrators, opinion leaders and commentators argued that provision of a *second-best* alternive in the form of non-formal centres was morally indefensible. While the need to provide well functioning primary schools in all the villages, habitations and urban settlements was seen as the moral responsibility of the state, the *de facto* exclusion of children from very poor families, remote areas and those in difficult circumstances was not addressed squarely. Notwithstanding objections, 1986 policy gave official sanction to the concept of Non-formal education in backward regions of the country. When the scheme was being designed, anticipated resource crunch led to a model where the non-formal instructor was to be paid a small pittance by way of 'honorarium'. At that time there was a major hue and cry over the effectiveness of spreading resources too thin. Parallels were drawn with the NAEP that was in the process of being wound up.

resources, funds all the national initiatives mentioned above. Expenditure on education now stands at 3.9 per cent of GNP with a total investment of Rs 44,583 million by the States and Rs 34,410 million by Government of India in 1996-97 (Source: Towards the next millennium – India Status Report, GOI, September 1997). The DPEP initiative has estimated an expenditure of Indian Rupees 400 million per district over the project period of five years. This is a soft loan from the World Bank, which the Government will repay over a long period. It is difficult to estimate the investment in girls' education.

Monitoring mechanisms:

Government of India has a well established system for monitoring programmes and submitting regular reports to State Assemblies and the Parliament. While nationally funded projects follow the routine system of reporting through a MIS system; externally assisted projects and programmes follow two parallel systems. While the regular system continues to operate, each donor-assisted project has its own reporting system. Annual reports, periodic review missions and mid-term and end-project evaluations are followed by most donors. However, DPEP follows a different system with six monthly joint reviews and periodic issue specific studies. DPEP has also developed two software packages that enable monitoring through computerised information systems, i.e. Project Management Information System (PMIS) and Education Management Information System (EMIS). The centralised monitoring and assessment system provides information to all contributing donors and the World Bank. Some states have also done extensive household surveys to create base line information.

Lok Jumbish Rajasthan has evolved a unique planning, review and monitoring system. The system encourages a regular participatory process review consisting of Cluster level Review and Planning Meetings (monthly) to Block Level review and Planning Meetings (monthly) culminating in the State Level Review and Planning Meetings (periodic). In addition LJ has a computerised MIS system to track each component of the project i.e. building construction, training, retention registers, formation of village education committees, women's groups' etc. All information is disaggregated by sex and at any given point the project has information by sex from the village education committee to the state office located in Jaipur.

The bitter truth

For over a hundred years social reformers, educational planners and administrators committed to girls education have argued that the only way to enhance the pool of women teachers in rural and remote areas is by lowering qualifications for entry, posting women their homes and providing them with intensive and ongoing educational support and training. Some have even argued that if female teachers are not available, appointment of a local person who is known by the community can make a difference. Introducing condensed educational programme for school-dropouts in order to give such women/girls an opportunity to complete 10 years of schooling followed by intensive teacher training can create a cadre of rural women teachers.

Teachers' unions have resisted lowering educational qualifications for recruitment and school-specific recruitment. In most cases leadership of such associations are in the hands of urban men who have little empathy or commitment to women's equality or even girls education. While pilot initiatives like Shiksha Karmi Project of Rajasthan have surmounted this problem in remote pockets, it is still not accepted as a valid strategy in educational administration in India or for that matter even in Rajasthan. The sad truth is that this creative project is floundering and official support and backing is waning.

Introducing flexible timings, and context specific school calendars is necessary to promote enrolment and retention of girls. Here again teacher unions have resisted flexible school calendar and timing across the country. The urban/semi urban middle class and the rural middle class (including land owning castes) form the bulk of rural teachers. They are said to be the backbone of many political parties. Mobilisation during elections and subsequent political trouble shooting is done through teachers. They constitute a vocal and powerful group in electoral politics. Therefore it is not surprising that key policy recommendations have remained unimplemented.

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Governance and gender equity:

Where do girls and women stand today? It has been widely accepted that there is a latent demand for education among the poor, especially women and girls. Almost all people working with poor rural and urban women say that women not only realise the value of education, they also want to send their daughters to school in order to give them the opportunity of a better life. They acknowledge the empowering role of education, especially in negotiating an unjust world from a position of strength. Ability to read is seen as a necessity to calculate wages and rates, to know what one is signing, to access information, and above all, to walk with one's head high. We have also seen that given the right environment, opportunity and facilities – women and girls participate with great enthusiasm.

Ostensibly all the programmes listed in the section above are formally committed to bridging the gender gap. This focus is often lost during implementation. Programme strategies for mobilisation, teacher recruitment and training, and community involvement through village education committees are organised in a gender-neutral fashion. Lack of gender sensitivity among administrators and technical people becomes a stumbling block. As a result, special cells, gender consultants, girls' and women's components get marginalized. While official checklists are complete, weaving gender issues into mainstream planning and administration remains a major challenge. While administrators at the top reiterate their commitment to bridge the gender gap in educational access and achievement, this is not the case down the line. Women who work as gender consultants, trainers and resource persons are not only outcastes, but are often the butt of jokes in an essentially male dominated system.

Is this an insurmountable barrier? Experience of special programmes, not just in the education sector, but in some other social sectors, shows that a systematic orientation and sensitisation programme at all levels is a good starting point. Appointing one *gender consultant* does not work. On the other hand, giving each worker three-dimensional responsibilities may be the answer. For example, in a District level office there could be a three-way work allocation. At the first level, each person takes responsibility for different aspects/components like formal schools, non-formal centres, extra-curricular programmes like fairs, exhibitions, competitions, school-health etc. At the second level the same people are asked to pay special attention to girls, children with disabilities, children from disadvantaged castes/communities etc. And at the third level each worker is made fully responsible for one small geographical area. In such a system a team consisting of five workers will have a very interesting job profile. For instance one worker may be in charge of non-formal education centres, girls' education and also be in charge of one cluster of 25 villages. Logistical issues like distribution of textbooks, incentives, payment of travel allowances for teachers and so on should be distributed territorially. Therefore if a person is in charge of a cluster of 25 villages – she/he should ensure timely distribution of supplies and reimbursement, address teacher motivation issues etc. This kind of system can help us break out of airtight boxes and those in charge of girls will not feel marginalized. This system is operational in Rajasthan Lok Jumbish – with startling results.

Invisible and uncomfortable issues in the work environment need to be brought upfront. Why do women teachers hesitate to attend residential training programmes? How does the dual burden of girls and women affect pace of learning? Who is asked to prepare tea and serve during meetings? Why are girls invisible in school mapping exercises? Unfortunately, it is not easy to address such issues in a large system. Administrators admit that main line systems are not amenable to change. Caste and regional prejudices persist even after fifty years of Independence. In recent times basic values of social justice and equal opportunity have been rapidly eroding. One social commentator wrote about the state as private property. Good governance, justice, honesty, equity – these words are rarely heard in political campaigns and speeches. Therefore, some people argue, it is not surprising that women and girls continue to be marginalized.

Is the situation so grim? Can educational administrators really implement the government's own policy and ensure gender equality? Innovations and bold experiments – small and big – give us reasons to hope. It is in this context that the experience of Rajasthan Lok Jumbish is noteworthy.

Rajasthan Lok Jumbish
Gender Sensitivity in management

Since the inception of LJ, gender sensitivity has been woven into the philosophy and structure of the organisation. As different organisations have different interpretations about this phrase, it would be helpful to clearly state what gender sensitivity in LJ management means:

- Firstly, it means what circumstances should be created to appoint women in reasonable proportion.
- Secondly, it implies that women should be able to work as equals and should not have to conform to stereotyped expectations. They should, moreover, have appropriate working conditions and facilities for safety and essential comfort.
- Thirdly, women's role in the family and responsibilities of motherhood should be recognised. They should be enabled to work at a time and pace suitable to them. The fact that, generally speaking, they have to bear a double burden should be acknowledged and scope provided to them get over fatigue.
- Fourthly, circumstances that result in women's isolation should be altered - at the individual as well as group level. An organisation should attempt to create women's collectives and networks for empowerment.
- Fifthly, necessary steps should be taken to prevent sexual abuse and mental and other harassment. Exemplary penal measures should be taken if such happenings were to occur.
- Sixthly, women must have a say in decision making. This should not be confined to decisions that affect women staff members and women and girls in educational and related situations, but all decisions, including decisions concerning policy and finance.
- Seventhly, a gender sensitive system of educational management has to have the capability to extend gender sensitivity to the entire system of education and to monitor it.

It would not be correct to say that in LJ we have been able to create such an organisation. However, what can, perhaps, be said is that efforts are made in this direction and each year we take concrete steps to improve the situation.

Source: Lok Jumbish – The Seventh Report, January 1998

Political will, commitment and leadership:

Reviewing the march towards gender equity in educational access in different parts of the country, it is now more than evident that political will, administrative commitment and leadership are key. In regions/states where girls' and women's status is relatively better, gender disparities are low. However, there are regions in India where this will is not evident, some people even argue that there is a will to keep girls and women in a state of subordination. Despite the odds, presence of committed officers in administration and charismatic leaders in civil society make all the difference. Let us take the case of Rajasthan. In the last ten years this State has been a pioneer of sorts. Some of the most creative strategies to reach the unreached have evolved in Rajasthan. Nevertheless, the mainstream education system continues to be indifferent. While special projects like Shiksha Karmi and Lok Jumbish are breaking new ground; the rest of the education system is, by and large, apathetic.

Social change and administrative reform invariably get the initial push from committed leaders. Within a system, there are those who break the path and make the journey less formidable for others. Such leaders are important not only to trigger change, but

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also to nurture and create enabling systems and mechanisms for workers down the line. It is therefore important to identify such leaders, and give them the mandate to work. The Indian administrative system is based on the principle that generalists, who do not have *roots* or *vested interests* are, by definition, superior to those who have a stake in what they do. Experiences of successful initiatives in the government and in the non-government sector point to the role played by dynamic and committed leaders in making the system work to the best advantage of the *beneficiaries*. Staying power within a department, district, programme or project is somehow frowned upon. Looking back over fifty years of government functioning, it is quite apparent that committed civil-servants, technocrats, specialist have been the only ones who have made a significant difference. Yet, the system continues to transfer teachers every few years, move committed civil servants from positions where they have made an impact. The system binds and bind everyone to inflexible rules and regulations. Even when autonomous bodies are created to provide for flexibility, they gradually take on the character of the main system and loose their flexibility and innovativeness. Recruitment policies, transfers, financial decentralisation and devolution of administrative powers to lower levels become contentious issues.

For example, when Mahila Samakhya Societies were created it was generally agreed that project personnel would be appointed after careful screening for commitment and aptitude to work with poor rural women. However, in a State this became a contentious issue in the early years. The State Programme Director and functionaries who controlled finance and administration were recruited from the State Civil Service. Given their background they chose to follow government procedures and identified themselves with the government. The flexibility provided in the project document to launch and implement a women's empowerment programme was not realised. This became a major bottleneck and the programme could not take off as expected. While field level processes and training were organised with the help of NGOs and social activists the project structure viewed them with suspicion. As a result, there was a lot of tension between field level staff and the project administration. It took the State Government almost five years to accept the importance of providing space for innovation and a flexible structure that can respond to emerging needs of the programme. It was only when the Government appointed a non-civil service person as the State Director that the programme was able to realise the potential of an autonomous structure.

Financial norms and procedures, administrative authority and delegation of responsibility with authority remain problem areas. Making a system responsive to the needs of the poor, reaching out to those who have had no access to quality education, understanding the constraints that prevent girls and women from accessing education – all these demand sensitive administrative systems and dynamic leadership. When rules and procedures are framed, the programmatic needs are not taken as the starting point. Existing government norms and procedures determine how funds will be used. Organisations and Government departments do not orient their financial and administrative staff. As a result they fail to appreciate programme issues and go by standard interpretation of rules and financial procedures. In most cases, programme staff do not see their colleagues in finance and administration as partners. As a result, the attitude of the latter is not very favourable to the former, leading to innumerable bottlenecks.

It is here that the aptitude and commitment of the leader is of critical importance. Some organisations suddenly come alive with a change at the top. The same rigid rules and procedures acquire a new image when the entire system, including financial and administrative staff, are geared to meet programme objectives. Leadership makes all the difference. Identifying civil servants and technical people committed to girls' and women's education, sensitising, orienting and empowering them to work for achieving the girls of universal education for girls and women – is the need of the hour.

Bridging the gap between intent and action involves a wide range of hard management decisions. It is not enough to proclaim one's good intentions through policy documents and statements. India has no dearth of good policies and programmes. The basic question is one of commitment to act. Reviewing interesting initiatives, successful inno-vations and effective programmes, one cannot but notice that India is a country of varied experiences. No document can do justice to the hundreds of stories, small and large, that made a difference. From committed teachers who plug along regardless of insensitive system and harsh ground conditions to large national projects that have become show pieces of the nation – it is not such a grim situation. The

challenge before us is to devise ways and means to harness the experience of micro-initiatives, both in the government and non-government sector in order to bring about meaningful change in the management of education. We have wonderful policies, but are at a loss to implement them. Instead of working on new policy documents every few years, we as a nation will do well if we decide to set aside all debates and discussion on policy and focus on the effective implementation.[8] We have talked the talk, lets now resolve to walk the walk, however arduous the journey may be.

Innovations in the public sector with potential for large scale replication:

- Micro-planning and school mapping as a technique to enumerate all children in the school going age, record their enrolment and attendance status, estimate demand for non-formal education, identify barriers to participation, take stock of infrastructure. Teacher attendance and motivation has been tried out in Rajasthan Lok Jumbish with considerable success. Using this information, generated by local people through Village Education Committees, Prerak Dal (group of animators) or rural women's groups work out decentralised strategies for mobilisation, improving school environment and motivating and supporting teachers. The result is micro level plans that reflect the felt needs of the community. Lok Jumbish has introduced both a Village Education Register and Retention Register to keep track of, and update, information. This system of *planning from below* has resulted in opening new schools, establishing non-formal education centres, organising residential camps/programmes for out-of-school adolescent girls and organising decentralised training for teachers, village level animators and members of village education committees. This effectively results in transferring the initiative to the people and to educational administrators working at the Block and District levels. In Rajasthan this has brought into the open the phenomenon of the invisibility of girls and has forced rural communities to think about the status of girl children.

- The Shiksha Karmi Project of Rajasthan pioneered the system of para teachers to address the problem of teacher absenteeism and non-functional schools in remote rural areas. Young youth from rural communities are identified and trained to work as teachers, with intensive ongoing resource and training support from educational resource groups (NGOs). This project runs three types of schools. One, Shiksha Karmi (Educational Workers or para teachers) take over and run dysfunctional primary schools as Day Schools. Two, Prehar Pathashala (schools of convenient timings) are run in the evenings or nights to accommodate girls and working children. The same Shiksha Karmi who runs the Day School also manages the Prehar Pathashala. Three, Angan Pathashala (introduced on an experimental basis in 1992) provide girls with easy access to primary schooling within reasonable distance from home. A woman is preferably selected as a teacher and runs the school in an *Angan* (courtyard of a home). The community provides the space or the school functions in the residence of the teacher. (Source: Reaching Out Further – Para Teachers In Primary Education: An Overview, DPEP Bureau, GOI, 1998)

- Sahaj Shiksha Karyakram (Non-formal Education Centres under Lok Jumbish) presently run 2,326 centres in 33 Blocks of Rajasthan. The SS schools are opened after the micro planning and school mapping process, with the full support of the community. The village community is expected to provide land and to bear any cost incurred beyond the grant money of Rs 10,000. The schools are open for 250 days a year and offer courses to achieve Class V level competency. Learners (mostly girls) in the 9-12 age group take approximately three years to reach that level of competence. Younger children take five years. The classes run for two and a half hours a day and the timings are fixed in consultation with the community – day or night. Each SS school has a library and the teacher are trained intensively and supported continuously. Almost two-thirds of children attending these schools are girls.

- Mahila Samakhya, meaning women's equality through education, is a women's empowerment project which seeks to bring about change in women's perception of themselves and that of the society. It endeavours to create an environment for women to mobilise themselves into collectives. Women are to seek knowledge and information in order to make informed choices

8 Source: Indian Experience: Bridging the Gap Between Intention and Action, Girls' and Women's Education in South Asia; UNESCO-PROAP and ASPBAE, 1998

and create circumstances in which they can learn at their own pace and rhythm. The centrality of education and life long learning is an important focus of the project. A *Sahayogini* (a cluster co-ordinator in 10 villages) facilitates the process of mobilisation and organising women. She functions as the link between women and the project structure. She accesses and organises resource support by way of training and other inputs to meet the emerging demands of women. These demands range from childcare support to workshops, fairs and training programmes on specific issues/themes. Where possible, the programme links up with other development initiatives. For example, the programme has had links with the public distribution system, the health care system with access to forest produce and education. This Dutch Assisted programme is operational in 5000 villages of Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh. It has been recently extended into Madhya Pradesh and Assam through the DPEP initiative.

- Mahila Shikshan Vihar, Mahila Shikshan Kendra and other residential condensed education programmes for adolescent girls and young women. Initially conceived in Mahila Samakhya as a strategy to enhance the pool of educated women who can be trained as educational workers, this programme for residential condensed courses has since been adapted by Lok Jumbish for adolescent girls. Girls and young women join the residential programme and achieve Class V level competency within six months to one year. The curriculum is developed in such a way that the students not only achieve Class V level competency, but also gain self confidence and become self assured young women.

There is a way – some recommended strategies:

India is rich in policies, thus almost every conceivable strategy to promote girls' education has been covered. The problem lies in implementation. It is therefore necessary to concentrate on making the system work and deliver the services. The following areas need special attention and intensive advocacy to persuade political leaders, policy makers and administrators to reform the system.

- **Shut the tap before mopping the floor.** Unless every child – girl and boy – has an opportunity to go to school, and is retained and taught in school for at least five years there will be no significant change in the educational scenario in India. Adult and Non-formal education programmes will then make a qualitative difference. Non-formal and other forms of partial education programmes cannot be a substitute for universal access to elementary education. This is of particular importance for girls' education. Ensuring every girl child experiences childhood and has access to schooling should be the priority of all educational interventions.

- Identify the most deprived sections of society and design and implement time-bound special programmes for girls. Link the special programmes to the formal school system (where feasible) and give a big push to girl children from the poorest and the most disadvantaged sections of the society. Rajasthan Shiksha Karmi Project provides a good model that can be replicated across the country.

- Similarly, running time-bound special educational programmes for adolescent girls (and boys) who are either out of school or have completed grade 5 and have nowhere to go or have never been to school. Focusing on education, skill development, self-confidence building and health education of adolescents will create a critical mass of educated women in society. The ripple effect of this needs no elaboration. Such an intervention will have a positive impact on primary education – creating role models that have visibly benefited from education. This intervention lends itself to effective NGO – Government collaboration.

- Upscale and replicate innovations that have made an impact (see page 16 of this paper) by organising intensive training and study tours for a team that is ready to initiate or strengthen a programme. Organisations like UNESCO can play a very important role in partnership with the Government. Intensive advocacy to replicate the lessons of few successful innovations could be followed by an intensive training/study tour. Handholding, nurturing and encouraging innovation is necessary. However, it is important to keep in mind that only the generic principles can be replicated. No model, however successful, can be duplicated. Duplication of models can be disastrous – especially in a country with so much diversity.

- Orient and train educational administrators, teachers and faculty in training institutions and sensitise them to gender dimensions of educational access and give them the necessary skills to deal with gender issues in their working and living environment. Training a few individuals in an organisation will not suffice. A critical number of converted and motivated functionaries are necessary to bring about sustainable change in any organisation.

- Follow-up gender sensitisation training with appropriate administrative reform. Rules, regulations, work ethics, training systems and a whole range of management systems need to be reviewed from the gender lens. Some examples have been cited in this paper.

- Do away with stand alone gender consultants or women's focal points in mainstream institutions. Create a three-dimensional (matrix) system. A three-way work allocation system can be adopted. For example each functionary can be given three interlocking responsibilities. Dimension one related to a component of the programme (formal, non-formal, extra-curricular, school health, teacher training, curriculum development etc.). Dimension two related to a special focus group - girls (even here one can distribute between urban poor, rural backward community, minority) children with disabilities, children from disadvantaged castes / communities, children of nomadic tribe etc. Dimension three where each worker is made fully responsible for one small geographical area – with full responsibility for logistics, personnel and finance. Each functionary ends up with an interesting job profile. The danger of marginalisation can be addressed in this way. Training and support of functionaries to work in a holistic manner is a precondition for the success of this strategy.

- Create a public platform at the District/State/ Regional level where key political leaders are invited to publicly commit themselves to promoting girls' education. Follow up with regular news/information on what is happening where. The main focus could be on facilitating the implementation of Government's policies and programmes. This platform could also be used for seeking information, recognising teachers who have made a difference, giving awards, bringing to light persistent absenteeism by teachers in some areas and so on. Making primary education a public and political issue may go a long way in building political commitment and administrative will.

Needless to add, mounting international pressure on India to implement existing policies, can create a favourable climate for in-country advocates to push for girls and women's education. At this stage, India needs to focus on girls and adolescents. This will not only shut the tap but will create an environment where adult women will feel enthusiastic about learning and education. Ultimately, generating a demand that we can no longer ignore could be the mother of innovations for women's education. Educate the girls and women will soon follow.

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1. Mr. Abhimanyu Siingh, Joint Secretary – Elementary Education, Department of Education, MHRD, GOI
2. Mr. Amarjit Sinha, Deputy Secretary – Elementary Education, Department of Education, GOI, MHRD, GOI
3. Dr. Sharada Jain, Sandhan Shod Kendra, Jaipur
4. Mr. Anil Bordia, Lok Jumbish Parishad, Jaipur
5. Ms Aparna Sahay, Former Director of Lok Jumbish, Jaipur
6. Ms Renuka Mishra, Nirantar, New Delhi
7. Mr Suresh Kumar, UNDP Education Project, New Delhi
8. Mr Avik Ghosh, National Institute of Adult Education, New Delhi
9. Mr Jalaluddin, Expert in Adult Education, New Delhi
10. Dr. Leela Visaria, Gujarat Institute of Development Research, Ahmedabad – Currently based in New Delhi
11. Dr. Pravin Visaria, Director, Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi
12. Ms Charu Gupta, Health Watch, New Delhi

Annex I

Ever Enrolment, Discontinuation And Non-Attendance Rates (Per Cent) For Children (Aged 6-14) And Gender Disparity By Select States In Rural India

	Ever Enrolment Rates				Discontinuation Rates				Non-Attendance Rates			
	Person	Male	Female	F/M	Person	Male	Female	F/M	Person	Male	Female	F/M
Rural India	71.4	77.1	64.8	0.84	0.84	6.0	4.8	7.6	1.56	7.0	7.0	1.00
Andhra Pradesh	79.5	85.1	73.8	0.87	9.9	8.2	12.1	1.48	5.9	5.9	5.9	0.99
Himachal Pradesh	92.7	95.5	90.0	0.94	2.0	1.8	2.2	1.2	3.5	3.5	3.5	0.98
Kerala	98.6	99.6	99.2	0.99	1.7	1.5	2.0	1.32	3.7	3.9	3.5	0.91
Orissa	70.9	78.5	63.4	0.81	7.6	6.2	9.3	1.5	11.7	12.1	11.1	0.91
Rajasthan	61.3	78.0	41.9	0.54	4.2	3.1	6.6	2.13	3.8	4.3	2.6	0.61
Tamil Nadu	87.7	90.9	84.3	0.93	10.9	7.5	14.8	1.98	1.0	0.6	1.4	2.25
West Bengal	66.1	67.0	65.1	0.97	6.2	5.9	6.5	1.1	8.9	9.4	8.3	0.88

Ever Enrolment Rates (Per Cent) of Children (Aged 6-14) by Household Income, Social and Village Development Groups across select states in Rural India

	Household Income Groups				Social Groups				Village Development Groups			
	Up to 20,000	20,001 40,000	40,001 62,000	Above 62,000	ST and SC	Other Hindus	Muslim	Other Minority	Low	Medium	High	All Groups
Rural India	65.3	75.1	80.9	86.9	61.8	77.4	61.6	83.5	59.9	73.8	80.9	71.4
Andhra Pradesh	77.4	77.9	88.5	99.8	75.5	80.1	82.1	86.8	67.1	80.5	84.4	79.5
Himachal Pradesh	90.6	96.0	94.7	90.1	87.7	95.4	80.2	94.4	88.4	94.4	96.7	92.7
Kerala	98.6	98.7	97.9	98.9	97.2	99.1	97.7	99.4	99.1	98.3	98.8	98.6
Orissa	65.2	81.6	83.9	90.7	52.6	82.6	58.7	88.0	62.3	75.0	78.8	70.8
Rajasthan	53.9	61.9	75.4	79.2	48.9	68.2	42.7	56.9	59.4	61.8	71.8	61.3
Tamil Nadu	86.0	89.0	93.4	94.7	84.7	88.3	97.9	91.7	18.8	84.5	90.7	87.7
West Bengal	59.9	77.1	80.0	92.5	63.9	76.7	57.9	66.2	56.7	65.3	69.2	66.1

Source: Human Development Profile of India: Inter-State and Inter-Group Differentials; (HDI Survey 1994) NCAER, New Delhi, September 1996

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Annex II

Percentage distribution of persons of different age groups by general education levels
***Rural India*; NSS 1993-94**

Age Group	Not Literate	Literate NFE/AE	Literate TLC	Literate Others	Below Primary	Middle School	Secondary	Higher Sec	Graduate & above	Not Recorded	All
5-9 - M	39.9	0.2	0.1	2.1	54.6	2.9	0.1	-	-	0.1	100
5-9 - F	49.8	0.2	0.1	1.7	45.4	2.6	0.1	-	-	-	100
5-9 - T	44.6	0.2	0.1	1.9	50.2	2.7	0.1	-	-	-	100
10-14 M	18.1	0.1	0.1	0.8	34.0	35.0	11.3	0.5		0.1	100
10-14 F	35.5	0.1	0.1	0.8	27.2	26.9	8.8	0.5	-	0.1	100
10-14 T	26.0	0.1	0.1	0.8	30.9	31.3	10.2	0.5	-	0.1	100
15-19 M	23.4	0.3	0.2	0.4	9.1	17.1	30.0	15.1	4.3	0.2	100
15-19 F	45.6	0.3	0.3	0.4	9.0	12.8	18.7	9.5	2.4	-	100
15-19 T	33.5	0.3	0.2	0.4	9.0	15.6	24.9	12.5	3.5	0.1	100

Urban India

Age Group	Not Literate	Literate NFE/AE	Literate TLC	Literate Others	Below Primary	Middle School	Secondary	Higher Sec	Graduate & above	Not Recorded	All
5-9 - M	23.0	0.5	0.2	3.0	68.8	4.2	0.2	-	-	-	100
5-9 - F	26.0	0.3	0.7	2.3	67.0	4.0	0.1	-	-	0.1	100
5-9 - T	24.4	0.4	0.2	2.7	67.9	4.1	0.1	-	-	-	100
10-14 M	7.4	0.1	0.1	0.6	28.3	43.7	18.5	1.2	-	0.1	100
10-14 F	11.4	0.2	-	0.8	24.2	42.6	19.2	1.4	-	0.1	100
10-14 T	9.3	0.1	-	0.7	26.3	43.2	18.9	1.3	-	0.1	100
15-19 M	10.7	0.1	0.1	0.4	7.6	13.7	30.1	24.7	12.4	0.3	100
15-19 F	15.9	0.2	0.1	0.5	6.3	13.4	25.5	24.4	13.6	0.3	100
15-19 T	13.0	0.1	0.1	0.4	7.0	13.6	28.0	24.5	12.9	0.3	100

Source: Fifth Quinquennial Survey, NSS Fiftieth Round, July 1993-June 1994, National Sample Survey Organisation, Department of Statistics, GOI, March 1997 (Compiled from tables 20)

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Annex III

School attendance rates (percent) by age group and household monthly per capita expenditure class

Rural India

Household Per Capita income	5 - 9 Age Group			10 - 14 Age Group			15 - 19 Age Group		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Less than 120	43.4	33.2	38.1	54.6	31.1	42.9	28.0	06.3	17.1
120 - 140	49.8	38.4	44.3	58.6	36.6	48.9	28.3	06.4	18.4
140 - 165	57.4	44.9	51.3	65.4	43.2	55.2	29.3	09.7	20.4
165 - 190	60.4	48.0	54.6	68.5	44.1	57.3	30.1	11.7	21.5
190 - 210	62.4	53.1	58.0	72.6	50.6	62.4	36.1	16.1	27.4
210 - 235	68.5	56.7	63.0	75.6	53.3	65.4	35.5	17.5	27.5
235 - 265	72.4	60.3	66.7	80.5	57.2	69.6	39.8	19.5	30.7
265 - 300	74.6	68.1	71.6	82.3	64.8	74.5	41.7	20.7	32.3
300 - 355	78.0	70.9	74.7	84.0	67.8	76.6	46.2	26.1	36.8
355 - 455	79.6	71.6	75.9	85.7	72.9	80.0	51.4	31.7	42.4
455 - 560	81.2	75.3	78.3	90.3	73.7	82.7	58.2	35.7	48.4
More than 560	86.6	83.1	85.0	90.6	78.5	85.1	61.3	37.4	50.7

Urban India

Household Per Capita income	5 - 9 Age Group			10 - 14 Age Group			15 - 19 Age Group		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Less than 120	61.2	48.6	55.2	64.6	51.5	57.7	29.1	18.8	24.6
120 - 140	68.0	62.8	65.2	72.8	63.6	68.3	31.6	17.4	25.3
140 - 165	72.2	69.8	71.1	78.8	70.3	74.5	37.3	30.1	33.9
165 - 190	78.1	75.0	76.1	82.9	77.1	80.1	45.1	31.6	38.7
190 - 210	84.9	79.6	82.4	86.3	80.6	83.6	44.9	38.4	42.0
210 - 235	89.0	84.1	86.7	87.6	85.8	86.8	57.4	47.5	52.9
235 - 265	89.5	90.4	90.0	90.5	89.2	89.9	57.2	50.9	54.3
265 - 300	90.9	89.8	90.4	92.0	91.2	91.6	61.3	57.4	59.5
300 - 355	93.4	91.6	92.6	94.0	89.8	92.0	71.3	65.7	68.8
355 - 455	97.1	94.8	96.0	95.5	95.8	95.6	75.3	72.5	74.0
455 - 560	97.3	92.4	95.2	97.6	96.3	97.0	80.9	77.9	79.6
More than 560	95.9	98.0	96.9	96.2	93.5	95.2	80.8	81.8	80.9

Source: Fifth Quinquennial Survey, NSS Fiftieth Round, July 1993-June 1994, National Sample Survey Organisation, Department of Statistics, GOI, March 1997 (Compiled from Tables 22)

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